DOCUMENT RESUME

AC 002 902

ED 023 984

By- Booth, Alan. Knox, Alan B.

Participation in Adult Education Agencies and Personal Influence.

Pub Date [68]

Note- 20p.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.10

Descriptors- Adult Characteristics, *Adult Education Programs, *Decision Making, *Human Resources, Informal Leadership, Information Seeking, *Interaction, Mass Media, *Participation, Statistical Data

The hypothesis is that persons who have limited experience in adult education programs report personal influence in connection with decisions to participate more often then persons who have more extensive experience. Although this was not clearly supported by data, other information was obtained. Both groups relied on informal opinion leaders more often than not. Participants were of a higher level of education than non-participants; married, belonging to several voluntary organizations; middle-aged, female, and residentially mobile. The following list shows the sources of influence; face-to-face (40%); mass communicated source (29%); unknown (31%). However, a total of 74% of all the respondents had face-to-face contact. The reasons for speaking include the need to obtain specific information (38%); to obtain reassurance (32%); to get someone else (13%); and to make personal arrangements (3%). Fourteen percent cited no motivational factors. It can be concluded that people tend to seek information through face-to-face contact rather than mass communicated sources. Implied is also the fact that the decision to participate involves social behavior. (nl)

PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION AGENCIES AND PERSONAL INFLUENCE

Prepared By

Alan Booth
University of Nebraska

Alan B. Knox
Teachers College, Columbia University

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to report findings from a research project designed to better understand the decisions of adults to participate in adult education programs. Specifically, the authors attempt to access the impact of face-to-face contact in decisions to participate, and to identify the characteristics of influentials in cases where personal influence was part of the decision-making process.

Over the past two decades the study of personal influence has underscored the importance of the primary group in the flow of information from the mass media. Studies in this area also have demonstrated the importance of personal influence in personal opinion formation and decision making.[1]

Research on opinion leadership and personal influence has focused on a wide variety of phenomena, such as political opinions, voting behavior, consumer behavior, and the adoption of innovations such as agricultural practices and drugs.[2] But there has been little or no research on the role of social interaction in an individual's decision to participate in a formal adult education program. However, there have been several studies of interation in connection with decisions to join formal voluntary associations. Such research suggests that face-to-face contact may be important in decisions to participate in a wide range of activities including educational programs for adults. Babchuk and Gordon, for example, found in their study of voluntary associations in a slum that social interaction was influential in up to 84 per cent of the decisions by new members to participate; Sills reports in The Volunteers that 90 per cent of the members' decisions to participate in an organization came as a result of face-to-face interaction; and Booth in a study of decisions to become affiliated with voluntary associations in Nebraska found that face-to-face contact was associated with 77 per cent of the decisions.[3]

The study reported in this article attempted to add to our knowledge about personal influence by examining opinion leaders and the individuals they

influence with respect to participation in adult education programs. Studies of personal influence, although not explicit about the structural differences between systems involving personal influence and other types of small groups, have been describing groups that: (1) do not exist beyond the life of the specific members forming them; (2) do not have specific rules defining the qualifications necessary to become a member (3) do not have explicit or stated purposes or goals; and (4) do not have specific rules defining the rights and obligations of members.

Although much of the literature on personal influence emphasizes relationships that are characterized by familiarity and equality, the present study emphasizes the role played by relative strangers who are opinion leaders as well as primary group members who are opinion leaders. Persons who were members of the respondent's immediate family or were described as a close friend are termed "informal opinion leaders" while those described as persons with whom the respondent had little or no prior contact were termed "formal opinion leaders." Our study defined an adult education program as an activity "which is planned with a definite educational purpose in mind, is scheduled at a certain time and has a competent person in charge who either meets with or corresponds with you." One or more educational meetings or units or sessions lasting at least an hour were necessary for an activity to be classified as adult education, but being charged a fee was not part of the definition used.

The finding that personal influence was pervasive in connection with decisions to join voluntary associations may be relevant to participation in adult education programs as well as to other forms of social participation. The decision to participate in any formal organization often implies an adjustment of interpersonal commitments in the kinship and friendship domains. Time spent in an adult education program may mean a decrease in the amount of

time spent on activities involving kin and friends. Personal contact may facilitate smooth adjustments made by the participant and significant others to alternations in their pattern of social intercourse. This factor led us to predict that face-to-face contact would be prominent in decisions to enroll in adult education programs.

Another factor that supports such a prediction concerns the emphasis of the educational program itself. For the entire duration of the educational program, the emphasis is on changing (primarily increasing) the participant's level of competence. This is more characteristic of educational programs than of activities in most other domains of life. As such, it constitutes a strain-producing situation. The person considering participation in adult education may attempt to reduce the tension through conversations with others. Such conversations might assist the person to access his ability to increase his competence in relation to the demands of the program or provide him with assurance and reinforcement that he is about to make the "correct" decision.

These two factors would be particularly operative in connection with decisions made by persons who had limited experience in adult education, more often than for decisions by persons for whom involvement in adult education was a customary mode of participation. Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

> Persons who have limited experience in adult education programs report personal influence in connection with decisions to participate more often than persons with more extensive experience.

The extent to which mass communicated information is important for a person in his decision to enroll in a formal adult education program has not been extensively explored. But if the research on decisions made in the selection of consumer products and decisions to vote provide an indication of the importance of personal influence among channels of communication, then it is reasonable to predict that personal influence will be the most

important among various channels in a person's decision to join a group. Thus, on this basis, it was hypothesized that:

> Persons who enroll in adult education programs report personal sources of information more frequently than mass communicated sources in their decision to affiliate.

The relative importance of personal sources demonstrated by a large quantity of research[4] suggests the proposition that:

> Persons who report personal sources as operating in their decision to enroll also report personal sources as more influential in their decision to affiliate than mass communicated sources.

Finally with regard to the relative influence of formal and informal leaders in decisions to enroll, most studies suggest that informal personal sources are those that are more trusted and credible, that friends are crucial in many decisions that are made.[5] From this it was hypothesized that:

> Persons who report opinion leaders operative in a decision to enroll also report informal opinion leaders as more influential in their decision than formal opinion leaders.

We also predicted that:

> Both informal and formal opinion leaders possess some special qualities or expertise that legitimizes their position as dispensers of information regarding adult education participation.

PROCEDURE

The data for our study were collected on two different occasions from a universe of adults residing in one of the Midwestern Plains States. On the first occasion a probability sample of 1,500 individuals were interviewed in 1961. Four years later a one-third random sample of the 1,500 were selected and as many of these persons as possible (402) were re-interviewed. On both

occasions a pre-tested structured interview schedule was used. The interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes and were administered by trained interviewers.

The original sample of 1,500 individuals between 21 and 69 inclusively was selected in 1961 utilizing area probability techniques and constituted a representative cross-section of the total population of the state.[6] Paired census areas were employed to reflect regional variations. The 93 counties in the state were grouped into 16 areas having comparable populations according to sex, age, marital status, formal education, occupation, and income, and the number of respondents included in the final 21 sample counties selected was calculated on the basis of the extent to which the area the county represented contributed to the total adult population of the state. A comparison of the characteristics of the sample population in the 21 sample counties with the 1960 U. S. census data revealed no differences exceeding one-half of one per cent.

Of the 500 respondents selected for the present study, 402 or 80 per cent were interviewed. Those persons whom we were unable to interview a second time tended to be persons who had lived in the community five years or less, had resided in communities having 50,000 or more residents, or who had some college experience. However, the differences between the original sample and those in the follow-up study were slight. We believe that these differences did not have serious consequences for the present analysis.

Respondents were asked, "Did you participate in any educational activities such as listed on this sheet within the past year?" As an aid to recall respondents were given a sheet containing the following categories: Regular School Subjects; Trade, Business and Vocational Subjects; Public Affairs and Citizenship; Home Improvement and Family Living; Hobbies and Recreation; Personal Development; Agricultural Subjects; Community Development; and Youth Leadership work. An affirmative response was followed by a series of questions

as to whether the respondent had participated in any educational activities before one year ago but within the previous four years, whether any of the programs represented the first time the respondent had ever taken part in a program sponsored by that organization, and whether the respondent had thought seriously about taking part in an educational program but then had decided not to do so. Participation questions were followed by questions on the way in which the respondent had learned about the program, the characteristics of the people with whom he had talked about the program, and any changes that occurred as a result of their discussion.

RESULTS

Thirty-four per cent reported that they had taken part in some sustained educational activity during the year preceding the interview. Trade, business and other vocational subjects (including agricultural topics) were most frequently reported and accounted for 36 per cent of the courses that were taken. Home improvement programs, regular school subjects, and courses in the area of personal development were next in frequency. Most participants took part either in conferences (54 per cent of the activities) or evening classes (30 per cent of the activities) sponsored by the county extension service and business and industry.

The individual who reported either extensive or recent participation in adult education programs was apt to have achieved a higher level of education than his non-participant counterpart; be married; belong to several voluntary associations; be middle-aged and female; and be residentially mobile.

Those who considered participating in adult education, reported contact with at least two potential sources of information about the program. Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents reported two or more sources. One of the sources of information was apt to consist of personal contact with someone including phone calls and personal correspondence. Seventy-four per cent of

the respondents reported face-to-face contact operating in their decision to enroll. Brochures and flyers were reported by 44 per cent of the respondents, while newspaper articles and ads were reported by 41 per cent of the respondents. Radio and television was reported by 13 per cent of the respondents, while another 21 per cent reported other miscellaneous sources. These findings support the hypothesis that persons who enroll in educational programs report personal sources of information more frequently than mass communicated sources in their decision to affiliate.

Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of those who reported face-to-face contact reported talking with more than one person. Friends were mentioned more often than any other category (34 per cent of the time). Professional counselors and relatives were mentioned next in frequency (13 per cent and 14 per cent of the respondents respectively). Four per cent mentioned their employer and the remaining 9 per cent mentioned acquaintances and co-workers. Respondents were asked to nominate the one source of influence "most" crucial in their decision to enroll: their answers underscored the importance of personal influence over other sources of information. Forty per cent of the respondents reported face-to-face contacts, 29 per cent nominated mass communicated sources, while the remaining 31 per cent were unable to nominate a "most influential" sources of information. The proposition that persons who report personal sources as operating in their decision to enroll also report personal sources as more influential in their decision to affiliate than mass communicated sources was supported by the data.

Apparently these conversations were not casual, insofar as the total time devoted to them reflects serious concern. One quarter (27 per cent) of the respondents reported total conversation time in excess of two hours. More than half (57 per cent) reported one hour or more, while only 13 per cent reported just a few minutes of conversation. Conversations focused on a wide

variety of different topics. Topics mentioned most often were: (1) course content and the requirements and demands that are apt to be made of the student (24 per cent), and (2) enrollment procedures, schedule and location of the program (22 per cent). Other topics were: present level of knowledge or ability (8 per cent); consequences to participant - more income, new job, re-entry into the labor force (11 per cent); expressive - self-expression, enjoyment, new experiences (11 per cent); personal arrangements - amount of fees, transportation, financing (10 per cent); and encouragement and re-assurance regarding the impending decision (9 per cent).

To obtain some insight into the motivational factors underlying face-to-face contacts, respondents were asked, "Why did you feel you wanted to talk with someone about this?" Their replies fell into four categories: (1) to seek specific information about the program (38 per cent); (2) to obtain reassurance about their decision (32 per cent), (3) to get someone else to participate with the respondent (13 per cent); and, (4) to make personal arrangements so that the respondent could attend (e.g., borrow money, get babysitter, etc.) (3 per cent). Fourteen per cent of the respondents could not report motivational factors. To the extent that impact is coterminous with perceived change, these conversations seem to have had little effect. Respondents were asked, "As a result of your conversation(s) with this person . . . "Would you say that you changed your mind in any way about the program?" Only six or 16 per cent of the respondents reported any change in their course of action related to the impending decision. The consequences of these conversations are not clear. It would seem that some conversations were utilitarian (seeking information about programs) while others were intended to seek reassurance and companionship. The opinion leaders (those who talked with our respondents) tended to be much like the people with whom they talked with in regard to sex and education. More than two-thirds of the opinion leaders

(73 per cent) were of the same sex as the persons they influenced, while slightly more than half (52 per cent) of the respondents had the same level of education as the respondent. However, opinion leaders were generally older and had higher occupational status than the people whom they influenced. Our assertion that influentials have some special qualities or expertise that legitimizes their position as dispensers of information regarding adult education programs is supported insofar as they possessed the ancillary qualities expected to accompany opinion leadership. That is, they were older and often held more prestigeous positions than the persons whom they influenced.

The respondents who reported that they considered enrolling in an adult education program sometime during the four-year period prior to the interview were divided into three categories reflecting differences in the amount of prior experience in adult education programs and whether or not they decided against participation. It was expected that the patterns of personal influence would be different for persons who considered participation and actually did so, compared with persons who considered participation but who decided not to do so. Further, it was reasonable to expect that the personal influence patterns of those who participated in the four years prior to the interview would differ systematically from those who had not participated during that period, because the decision to participate may represent more of a hurdle to those who had not participated. Adult Education participation five or more years prior to the interview was not considered because it was unlikely that the respondent would be able to accurately recall the circumstances surrounding a decision to participate. The three categories are:

1. Persons who did not participate in adult education prior to the interview who reported that they had considered participation for the first time in a new agency but had decided against it (non-participants);

2. Persons who had been involved in adult education programs prior to the interview who reported taking part in an agency's program for the first time (participants for the first time) · and
3. Persons who had been involved in adult education programs prior to the interview who reported that they had considered participation for the first time in a new agency but had decided against it (participants who considered).[7]

The differences between the adults in these three categories are revealing. Prior participants tended to use more different sources of information than did non-participants and they tended to use personal rather than mass communicated sources more often (Table 1). Those who participated in an agency for the first time reported more conversations than did persons who considered doing so but who decided not to enroll. When asked to nominate the most influential source of information, participants were more apt to report personal sources while non-participants were more apt to report mass communicated sources of information. That is, 48 per cent of the participants who considered, reported personal influence, while only 31 per cent of the non-participants who considered, did so. On the other hand 42 per cent of the non-participants reported mass communicated sources as most influential, while 16 per cent of the participants who considered, did so. However, the non-participants tended to spend more time in face-to-face contact with others regarding the pending decision than participants. Seventy-five per cent of the non-participants reported total conversation time of one hour or more with a key influential, while slightly over half of the participants did so.

The hypothesis that persons who have little or no experience in adult education programs report face-to-face contact in connection with decisions to participate more often than persons who have more extensive experience was

not clearly supported by the data. In fact, mass communicated messages were more prominent among those with limited experience. Perhaps interpersonal networks based on the flow of information are only generated among those who have participated in adult education--that is, a certain level of knowledge about adult education may be necessary in order to initiate questions and to pass on new information. However, the relatively lower frequency of face-to-face contact among those with limited experience in adult education does not mean that face-to-face contact cannot have the function of reducing strain and faciliating the adjustment of patterns of social intercourse. The finding that the novice is apt to report more lengthy conversations with the most crucial influential supports such a contention.

Non-participants tended to rely more on relatives and friends and less on professional counselors and the like than did persons who reported prior experience in adult education. Only 25 per cent of the former group reported that the most influential opinion leader in their decision was a relative stranger, while 37 per cent of the latter group reported contacts with such persons. However, both groups relied on informal opinion leaders more often than not. This lends support to the hypothesis that informal personal sources are crucial in decisions to enroll more often than formal opinion leaders.

Among persons who had participated in adult education in the four years prior to the interview, the time that the program was scheduled, where it was to be held, and what had to be done to enroll were important topics. The expressive consequences of participation were of concern to participants. but not to non-participants. Non-participants seemed to be concerned about their present level of knowledge or ability, course content, and expectations of the instructor to a greater extent than the participants. There was a conspicuous absence of seeking encouragement and reassurance among non-participants which would lead one to question the seriousness of their

interest. Even though seeking reassurance openly was not characteristic of non-participants, the higher proportion of non-participants who sought the accompaniment of a friend would suggest that they were seeking reassurance through another channel. Participants who considered enrolling but who decided not to do so appeared to make an inordinant attempt to obtain information about the program. Perhaps ambivalence about participation (tentatively deciding to participate and then choosing not to do so) tends to motivate face-to-face interaction in order to obtain support for altering a decision or to obtain sufficient information to make the "best or right" decision.

Finally, the opinion leaders for the non-participants tended to be older more often than those of the participants, have a higher level of education more often, and to have the same or a lower status compared with the participants.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it appears that an individual who considers participation in an adult education program either seeks or receives information from at least two sources. One of the sources of information is typically someone with whom he has face-to-face contact. Sources seen as most important or relevant to the individual's decisions are people with whom the individual has face-to-face contact rather than mass communicated sources of information such as newspaper ads or articles and brochures. If he talks with anyone at all about his decision, he is apt to talk with more than one person. These influentials are friends rather than relatives, professional counselors or teachers. The majority talked with the opinion leader for more than an hour (on one or more occasions). Program content, requirements, and enrollment procedures were important topics during these conversations. The reasons for the conversation that were most often given were to obtain information

about the program and to obtain socio-emotional support for the decision. The conversations between the opinion leader and the potential participant were not perceived as substantially affecting the decision or changing a course of action.

The influentials tended to be of the same sex and level of formal education as the respondent. However, the influentials tended to be older than the respondents and in some cases have more occupational status than the person influenced. In general, the influential appears to have ancillary but no special qualifications which legitimize his position. It would appear that the function of the personal influence tends to be supportive and social-emotional in character.

The non-participant who considers participating tends to use fewer sources than do the participants and fewer personal sources. The non-participants tended to discuss their own present level of knowledge, course content and requirements, and personal arrangements regarding finding the money for the fees and transportation more often than did the participants. In addition to obtaining information about the program, non-participants more often sought someone else to attend with them than did the participants. Finally, their contacts tended to be with persons who were older than themselves, and who had more formal education. Here the opinion leader seems to have a qualification that legitimizes his position and gives him a manifest "reason for being." His greater experience with education gives him both the credentials and the ability to counsel the potential participant. The person without recent experience in adult education is in special need of this service.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM PROMOTION

It is clear that the decision to participate in an adult education program involves social behavior. This social behavior seems to have a

particular function and occurs at a particular time. The function is not so much an instrumental one of learning about program content and registration procedures, but instead either gaining some confirmation that the decision to participate was the right one or trying to make participation in the program into a social event--an opportunity to engage in an activity with a friend. Those who considered enrolling but who decided not to, did not report such interaction which suggests that it is an important requisite of participation. The face-to-face contact does not serve to inform people about the program--this seems to be the function of mass communication.

What procedures does this suggest? First, mass media is necessary to transmit specific information about the program to the intended clientele. Second, because talking with others about the program seems to be an important part of the decision-making process, efforts should be made to encourage people to talk with others about the program. Specifically, an adult educator might do the following:

1. Provide opportunities for people to visit during in-person registration periods, (i.e., make coffee available and provide lounge facilities).
2. In the brochures and other mass-communicated promotion suggest that an interested adult might encourage a friend or co-worker to take the course - (reduced registration fees might be made available on a group rate).
3. Encourage potential participants to talk over the opportunities that the program provides with employers, supervisors, co-workers, and friends.
4. Encourage former participants to pass on promotional materials about the program, or to mention the program to persons they know

who might be interested in participating, or to be responsive to persons seeking information about the program.

5. For specific programs, mass communicated promotion could be directed at probable opinion leaders, encouraging them to visit with potential participants (e.g., parents for young adult programs, sales managers for courses aimed at their salesmen).

[1]The principal studies in this area include the following:

Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice, New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.

Robert K. Merton, "Patterns of Influence" in Paul Lazarsfeld and Frank Stanton (eds.), Communications Research 1948-1949, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949, pp. 180-219.

Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1955.

Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld and William McPhee, Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954.

Herbert Menzel, Elihu Katz, "Social Relations and Innovation in the Medical Profession: The Epidemiology of a New Drug," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 19: Winter, 1955, pp. 337-352.

James Coleman, Elihu Katz and Herbert Menzel, "The Diffusion of an Innovation Among Physicians," Sociometry, Vol. 20, 1957, pp. 253-269.

Otto Larsen and Richard Hill, "Mass Media and Interpersonal Communication in the Diffusion of a News Event," American Sociological Review, Vol. 19, August 1954, pp. 426-443.

Melvin L. DeFleur and Otto N. Larsen, The Flow of Information, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958.

[2]Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet focused on voting behavior; Katz and Lazarsfeld focused on consumer behavior; research related to agricultural practices is reported in Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962; and the diffusion of a drug was the focus in Menzel and Katz, op. cit.

[3]N. Babchuk and C. W. Gordon, The Voluntary Association in the Slum, Lincoln, Nebraska, University of Nebraska Press, 1962.

David L. Sills, The Volunteers: Means and Ends in a National Organization, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1957, pp. 102-103.

Alan Booth, "Personal Influence and the Decision to Participate in Voluntary Associations," paper presented at the Mass Communication Section Meeting, American Sociological Association Meeting, August 1966.

[4]Katz and Lazarsfeld, op. cit., and Menzel and Katz, op. cit.

[5]Katz and Lazarsfeld, op. cit., suggested the reasons why informal personal contact was more influential. Excellent social psychological experiments have been made in this area among them those reported in Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, op. cit.

[6]Two representative samples of 1,500 each were chosen from lists enumerating the households in the counties through use of a table of random numbers. The households in one sample were contacted for interviewing; the second sample was used for replacing households in which respondents had moved, died, refused to be interviewed, or were not contacted after three call-backs. The specific adult interviewed in each household was selected randomly.

[7]Sixty-three respondents who had participated in adult education during the year prior to the interview inadvertently were not asked whether any of the programs in which they had participated represented the first time they

had ever taken part in any educational programs sponsored by that particular organization. As this was a systematic discrimination rather than a random one, we cannot treat the remaining respondents who responded in the affirmative as a random sample, thus making statistical tests of significance inappropriate. As the sixty-three participated during the prior year and not during the two to four years prior to the interview, it was reasonable to expect that many of them would have participated for the first time in a particular agencies program. If the group who were not asked the question was similar to those who had answered the question affirmatively, it would also be reasonable to accept the assumption of randomness and thus use statistical tests of significance.

Although the two groups are similar in many respects, they also differ on several counts. The participants not asked tended to be urban residents more often than did the participants who took part in an agency's program for the first time and they also had a tendency to have less formal education. Both of these variables could conceivably affect the dependent variable. Those with less education may have fewer opportunities to discuss their decision with others as the extent of social participation tends to be less (with the exception of family ties) for those having less formal education (See Murray Hausknecht, The Joiners, New York, Bedminister Press, 1962). Community size could influence the extent to which counselors and other professional people are available for consultation. Therefore, statistical tests of significance will not be used.

Table 1

SUMMARY OF FACTORS DIFFERENTIATING CATEGORIES OF PARTICIPATION

Factors	Type of Participant		
	Non-Participants Who Considered	Participants for the First Time	Participants Who Considered
Sources of Information			
median number of different sources	1.6	2.1	2.2
% reporting two or more	55% (12)	68% (22)	78% (24)
% reporting persons	55 (12)	78 (25)	84 (26)
% reporting brochures	32 (7)	41 (13)	55 (17)
Most Influential Source			
Personal			
relative (spouse, etc.)	8 (2)	6 (2)	9 (3)
friend	19 (4)	9 (3)	27 (3)
other (professional counselor, employee, co-worker, etc.)	4 (1)	24 (7)	12 (4)
TOTAL	31% (7)	39% (12)	48% (15)
Mass Communicated			
brochures	14 (3)	12 (4)	6 (2)
newspaper	14 (3)	16 (5)	10 (3)
other (radio, TV, magazine, books)	14 (3)	3 (1)	---
TOTAL	42 (9)	31 (10)	16 (5)
Most important source not nominated	27 (6)	30 (10)	36 (11)
	100% (22)	100% (32)	100% (31)
N =	22	32	31
% of persons reporting personal influence who report two or more conversations	41 (5/12)	72 (18/25)	65 (17/26)

Table 1 (cont'd.)

	Non-Participants Who Considered	Participants for the First Time	Participants Who Considered
Characteristic of Opinion Leaders			
relative (spouse, sibling or other relative)	25% (3/12)	16% (4/25)	19% (5/26)
friend	50 (6/12)	40 (10/25)	50 (13/26)
other (professional counselor, employer, etc.)	25 (3/12)	44 (11/25)	31 (8/26)
Initiator of Conversation			
respondent	26 (3)	32 (8)	38 (10)
opinion leader	33 (4)	16 (4)	15 (4)
initiated equally or not reported	41 (5)	52 (13)	47 (12)
Length of Conversation			
less than hour	16 (2)	40 (10)	42 (11)
about one hour or more	75 (9)	52 (13)	54 (14)
Reason for Conversation			
to obtain information regarding the program and the demands made on the student	51 (6)	24 (6)	46 (12)
to make personal arrangements for attending	8 (1)	--	4 (1)
to get a friend to accompany	33 (4)	12 (3)	4 (1)
obtain reassurance about the decision	8 (1)	40 (10)	35 (9)
reason not reported	--	24 (6)	11 (3)
Characteristics of the Opinion Leaders			
same sex as respondent	75 (9)	72 (15)	77 (18)
sex of opinion leader different from respondent	25 (3)	28 (7)	23 (6)
influentials age higher	84 (10)	72 (18)	61 (16)
influentials age same as respondent	8 (1)	4 (1)	8 (2)
influentials age lower		4 (1)	8 (2)
influential has more formal education	33 (4)	24 (6)	15 (4)
influential has same formal education as res.	50 (6)	64 (16)	42 (11)
influential has less formal education than res.	--	4 (1)	8 (2)
influential has higher occupational status	33 (4)	60 (15)	46 (12)
influential has same occup. status as res.	33 (4)		23 (6)
influential has less occup. status than res.	--	8 (2)	19 (5)
N =	12	25	26